



California Postsecondary Education Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UC Irvine Awarded \$828,219 Improving Teacher Quality Grant

SACRAMENTO — December 3, 2007 — The University of California (UC), Irvine, has won funding for a new professional development project to help improve teaching in kindergarten through the second grade. The Grant will support teachers in the core content areas of Visual and Performing Arts and English Language Arts. The university was awarded a four-year grant of \$828,219 by the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) in a statewide competition. The project, titled “ArtsCore K-2: Teachers as Artists”, is a partnership between UC Irvine and the San Diego Unified School District.

The project will provide 180 teachers with two years each of summer institutes and school-based activities that will enable them to incorporate standards-based art education into their classes in ways that strengthen the English language skills of their students. In all, more than 7000 K-2 students in the district will be directly affected. A special feature of the project is that Teaching Artists will help teachers implement art lessons in their classrooms. In addition, the integration of arts into their basic curriculum is expected to help the students master English Language Arts standards. This project is patterned after a successful project conducted in high schools and piloted in K-2 classrooms in Orange County.

The grant is part of the federal Improving Teacher Quality Program funded under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (previously the Eisenhower Project). It is the latest edition of a long-standing federal program aimed at improving student achievement through professional development for teachers. In the two decades that CPEC has administered the program, more than \$93 million in grants have been awarded to colleges and universities working with high-need K-12 schools throughout California. The 2007 grants focus on supporting teachers in kindergarten through second grade in participating schools. They require rigorous research to demonstrate how this professional development affects student achievement as well as teacher practice.

While the professional development provided by the grants is vitally needed, the research requirement is especially important, according to CPEC Executive Director Murray Haberman. “Being required to demonstrate the impact of the professional development on student

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achievement, not just on teacher practice, is critical and supports CPEC's overall commitment to accountability in educational programs," Haberman said.

Olivia Singh, chair of the Commission, said the grants play an important role in making sure every student has a highly qualified teacher. "The program has had a long-term impact on helping teachers strengthen their content knowledge and their understanding of effective teaching strategies—key elements of education reform," Singh noted. "UC Irvine and its partner schools should be proud of the quality of their proposal and its potential for improving teaching and learning in San Diego."

The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. Its primary focus is to ensure that the state's educational resources are used effectively to provide Californians with postsecondary education opportunities. More information about the Commission and its work can be found on its website at www.cpec.ca.gov. For more information about the state program, contact Karen Humphrey, Administrator, Improving Teacher Quality Program, at 916-445-1504 or khumphrey@cpec.ca.gov. For information on the project described above, contact Dr. Liane Brouillette at 949-824-4317 or lbrouill@uci.edu.

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